



School Quality Review Report

Decatur Township School for Excellence

MSD of Decatur Township

April 9-10, 2018

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I. Background on the School Quality Review

Public Law 221 (PL 221) was passed in 1999 before the enactment of the federal *No Child Left behind Act* (NCLB). It serves as the state's accountability framework. Among other sanctions, the law authorizes the Indiana State Board of Education (SBOE) to assign an expert team to conduct a School Quality Review for schools placed in the lowest category or designation of school performance for two consecutive years.

(a) The board shall direct that the department conduct a quality review of a school that is subject to IC 20-31-9-3. (b) The board shall determine the scope of the review and appoint an expert team under IC 20-31-9-3. (Indiana State Board of Education; 511 IAC 6.2-8-2; filed Jan 28, 2011, 3:08 p.m.: 20110223-IR-511100502FRA)

The school quality review (SQR) is a needs assessment meant to evaluate the academic program and operational conditions within an eligible school. The SQR will result in actionable feedback that will promote improvement, including the reallocation of resources or requests for technical assistance. The process is guided by a rubric aligned to the United States Department of Education's "Eight Turnaround Principles" (see Appendix B). The school quality review includes a pre-visit analysis and planning meeting, onsite comprehensive review, and may include targeted follow-up visits.

State law authorizes the SBOE to establish an expert team to conduct the School Quality Review known as the Technical Assistance Team (TAT). Membership must include representatives from the community or region the school serves; and, may consist of school superintendents, members of governing bodies, teachers from high performing school corporations, and special consultants or advisers.

II. Overview of the School Quality Review Process

The School Quality Review process is designed to identify Decatur's strengths and areas for improvement organized around the [United States Department of Education's Eight School Turnaround Principles](#). In particular, the School Quality Review process focused on two Turnaround Principles that were identified as priorities by the school and its district.

The on-site review consisted of the Technical Assistance Team (TAT) visiting the school for two days. During the two days, the TAT (1) conducted separate focus groups with students, teachers, parents, and community members (2) observed a professional learning community meeting with teachers, (3) observed instruction in 16 classrooms, and (4) interviewed school and district leaders.

Prior to the visit, teachers completed an online survey, with six of fourteen teachers participating. Parents and family members were also invited to complete a survey; 40 completed this survey. Finally, the school leadership team completed a self-evaluation. Both surveys and the self-evaluation are made up of questions that align to school improvement principles and indicators (Appendix B).

III. Data Snapshot for Decatur School for Excellence

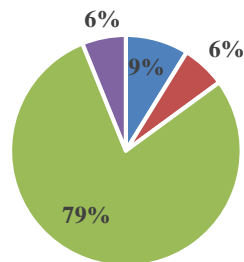
School Report Card

2015-2016 Report Card	Points	Weight	Weighted Points
Performance Domain Grade 10	19.20	0.250	4.80
Multiple Measures Domain Grade 12	64.00	0.750	48.00
Overall Points			52.8
Overall Grade			F

2016-2017 Report Card	Points	Weight	Weighted Points
Performance Domain Grade 10	23.60	0.400	9.44
Multiple Measures Domain Grade 12	37.70	0.600	22.62
Overall Points			32.1
Overall Grade			F

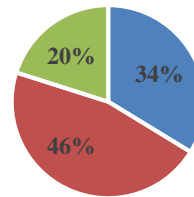
Enrollment 2017-2018: 262 students

Enrollment 2017-2018 by Ethnicity



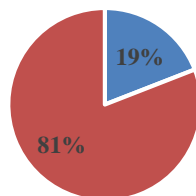
■ Black ■ Hispanic ■ White ■ Multiracial

Enrollment 2017-2018 by Free/Reduced Price Meals



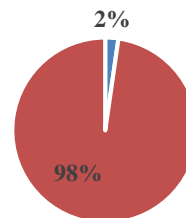
■ Free Meals ■ Reduced Price Meals ■ Paid Meals

Enrollment 2017-2018 by Special Education



■ Special Education ■ General Education

Enrollment 2017-2018 by English Language Learners



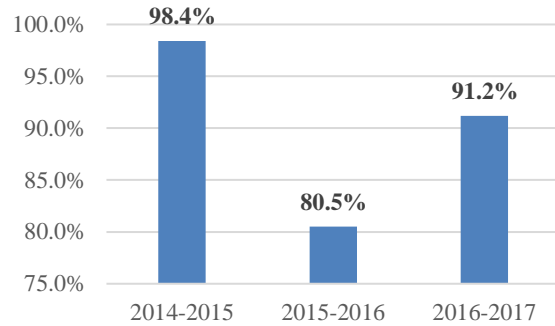
■ English Language Learner
■ Non-English Language Learner

Attendance

Attendance by Grade

Grade	'15-'16	'16-'17	'17-'18
9	31	32	37
10	31	53	61
11	30	64	79
12	73	83	85
12+/Adult	1		

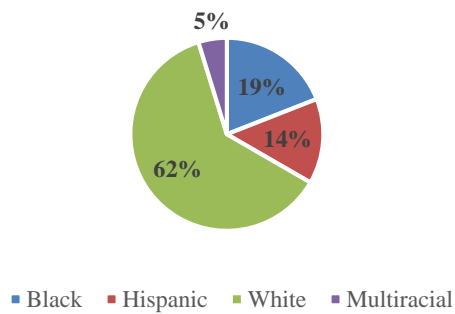
Attendance Rate Trend



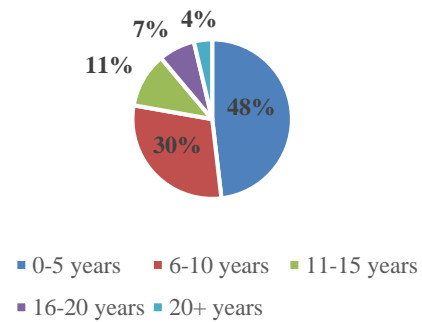
School Personnel

Teacher Count 2016-2017:14

Teacher Count 2015-2016 by Ethnicity

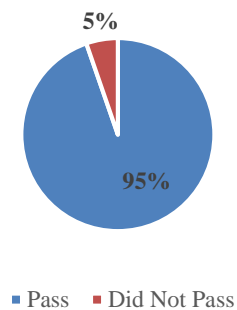


Teacher Count 2015-2016 by Years of Experience

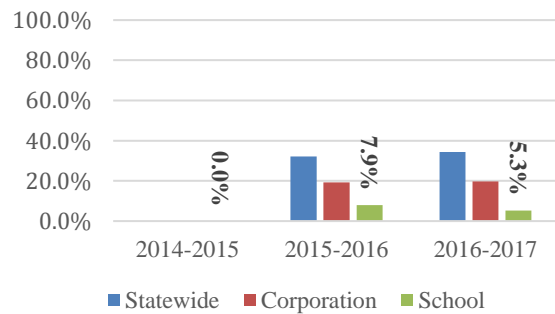


Student Academic Performance

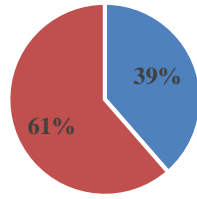
*ISTEP+ 2016-2017
Both English/Language Arts and Math*



*ISTEP+ Percent Passing Trend
Both English/Language Arts and Math*

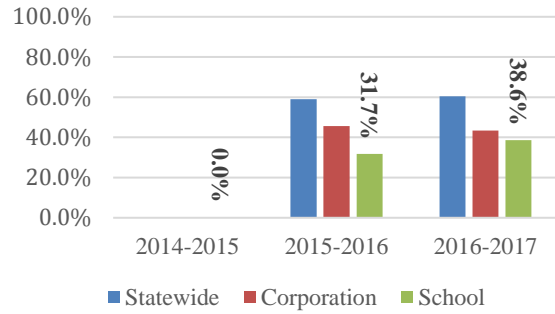


ISTEP+ 2016-2017: English/Language Arts

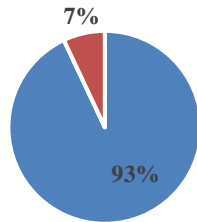


■ Pass ■ Did Not Pass

ISTEP+ Percent Passing Trend: English/Language Arts

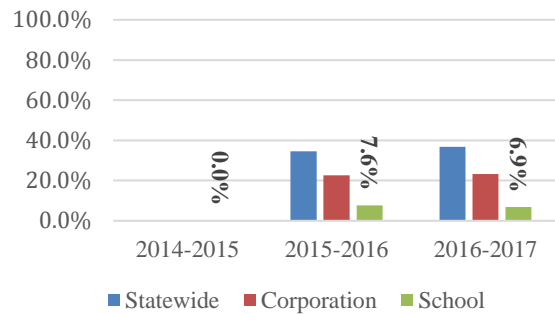


ISTEP+ 2016-2017: Math

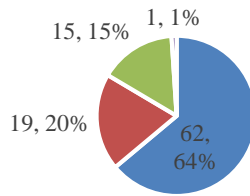


■ Pass ■ Did Not Pass

ISTEP+ Percent Passing Trend: Math

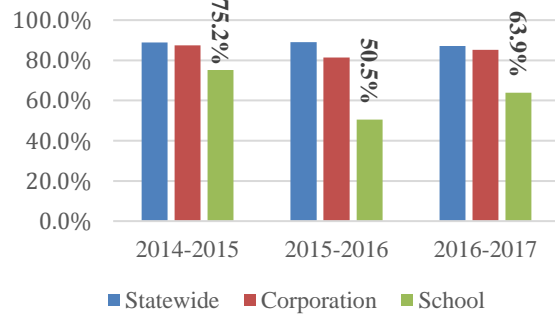


Four Year Cohort Status 2016-2017

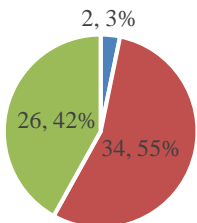


■ Graduates ■ Dropouts
■ Still in School ■ Course Completion

Four Year Cohort Graduation Rate Trend

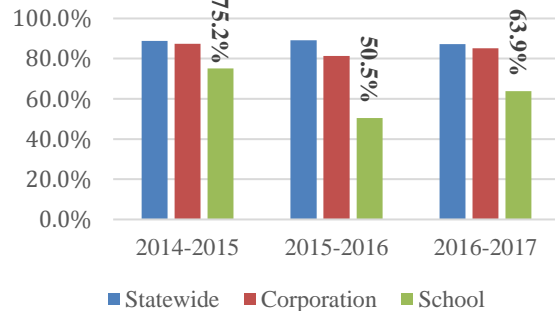


Four Year Cohort Diploma Types 2016-2017



■ Honors ■ Core 40 ■ General

Four Year Graduation Waiver Rate Trend



IV. Evidence and Rating for School Turnaround #2: School Climate and Culture

Background

The next three sections of the report illustrate the Technical Assistance Team's key findings, supporting evidence, and overall rating for each of the school's prioritized Turnaround Principles.

To thoughtfully identify these prioritized Turnaround Principles, school and district leaders used a "Turnaround Principle Alignment Tool" provided by the Indiana State Board of Education to determine the two to three Turnaround Principles that most closely align with the goals and strategies outlined in the school's improvement plan.

This report focuses on these prioritized Turnaround Principles to provide a strategically targeted set of findings and recommendations. Additional evidence on the other five Turnaround Principles can be found in Appendix A of this report.

School Turnaround Principle 2: School Climate and Culture			
Evidence Sources			
Classroom Observations, Observations of Hallway Transitions and Common Areas, Teacher Focus Group, Student Focus Group, Parent Focus Group, Community Focus Group, Principal Interviews, Teacher Surveys, Artifacts Provided by Decatur Township School of Excellence			
Rating			
1 <u>Ineffective</u>	2 <u>Improvement Necessary</u>	3 <u>Effective</u>	4 <u>Highly Effective</u>
<i>No evidence of this happening in the school</i>	<i>Limited evidence of this happening in the school</i>	<i>Routine and consistent</i>	<i>Exceeds standard and drives student achievement</i>
Evidence			
Strengths			Aligned Turnaround Principle Indicator(s)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Based on feedback from teachers and parents there is an increased sense of safety at Decatur Township School for Excellence. 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2.1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> According to stakeholder focus groups, the principal creates a positive school environment that supports the social, emotional, and learning needs of students and professional growth of teachers. 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1.3, 1.4, 1.8, 2.2, 7.3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Building wide trainings, as evidence by professional learning communities' structure, provide some opportunities for professional growth for staff. 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2.2, 5.2, 7.3

Areas for Improvement	Aligned Turnaround Principle Indicator(s)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Based on classroom observations and stakeholder focus groups, there is a lack of a consistent system of procedures for responding to classroom behavior, rewards, and consequences. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2.1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High expectations for academics were not visible in a majority of classrooms as evidenced by a lack of rigorous instruction and student learning. Teachers asked higher level questions in only 6% of classroom observations and checks for understanding occurred in 31%. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 1.7, 2.2, 2.3, 3.1, 3.6, 5.2, 5.3, 5.5, 6.3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Although interactions between teachers and students were mostly positive, there was minimal evidence of a growth mindset in some settings. Through collaboration and observations, the primary goals were on student compliance and meeting minimal academic expectations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1.4, 1.5, 1.7, 2.3, 3.6, 4.2, 5.2, 5.4, 5.5

V. Evidence and Rating for School Turnaround #3: Effective Instruction

School Turnaround Principle 3: Effective Instruction			
Evidence Sources			
Classroom Observations, Observations of Hallway Transitions and Common Areas, Teacher Focus Group, Student Focus Group, Parent Focus Group, Community Focus Group, Principal Interviews, Teacher Surveys, Artifacts Provided by Decatur Township School of Excellence			
Rating			
1 <u>Ineffective</u> <i>No evidence of this happening in the school</i>	2 <u>Improvement Necessary</u> <i>Limited evidence of this happening in the school</i>	3 <u>Effective</u> <i>Routine and consistent</i>	4 <u>Highly Effective</u> <i>Exceeds standard and drives student achievement</i>
Evidence			
Strengths		Aligned Turnaround Principle Indicator(s)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school calendar and daily schedule include protected professional development time in which all teachers regularly attend. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1.8, 1.9, 2.2, 3.5, 5.3, 7.3 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Faculty creates positive relationships with students providing an opportunity for meaningful feedback that ties to academic progress and high-quality work. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3.6 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Special education teachers provide effective, differentiated instruction by conferencing, working alongside students to provide accommodations, and embedding social-emotional support within their academic support. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2.2, 3.2, 3.4, 3.5, 3.6 	
Areas for Improvement		Aligned Turnaround Principle Indicator(s)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Few classrooms implement a variation of instructional strategies; in 33% of classrooms observed multiple instructional strategies were used to actively engage and meet student learning needs. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1.4, 1.5, 2.2, 2.3, 3.2, 3.4 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is little evidence that teachers use student learning data to inform their selection of instructional and response strategies; in only 50% of classrooms observed did the teacher consistently check for student understanding and adjust the lesson as needed. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3.2, 3.3 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Few SMART objectives are posted and align to standards-based instruction. In only 46% of classroom observations were objectives aligned to Indiana Academic Standards. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3.1, 3.3, 3.5 	

VI. Evidence and Rating for School Turnaround #4: Curriculum, Assessment, and Intervention Systems

School Turnaround Principle 4: Curriculum, Assessment, and Intervention Systems			
Evidence Sources			
Classroom Observations, Observations of Hallway Transitions and Common Areas, Teacher Focus Group, Student Focus Group, Parent Focus Group, Community Focus Group, Principal Interviews, Teacher Surveys, Artifacts Provided by Decatur Township School of Excellence			
Rating			
1 <u>Ineffective</u>	2 <u>Improvement Necessary</u>	3 <u>Effective</u>	4 <u>Highly Effective</u>
<i>No evidence of this happening in the school</i>	<i>Limited evidence of this happening in the school</i>	<i>Routine and consistent</i>	<i>Exceeds standard and drives student achievement</i>
Evidence			
Strengths		Aligned Turnaround Principle Indicator(s)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The master schedule provides time for student intervention and enrichment. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3.5, 4.5, 7.2 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Educators receive feedback based on non-evaluative walkthroughs to help them improve their instruction. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1.5, 1.6, 1.7, 4.2, 5.2 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Faculty have access to differentiated digital resources, through APEX, which could supplement content curriculum in intervention and remediation classes as well as in Tier 1 instruction. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4.1 	
Areas for Improvement		Aligned Turnaround Principle Indicator(s)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data analysis is isolated from ongoing instructional decision-making and professional learning. Existing meetings do not focus on instructional practices that will impact student learning. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3.3, 3.5, 3.6, 4.3, 4.5 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The district does not provide formative assessments in math and literacy; therefore, teachers are unable to use ongoing formative assessment data to measure student progress or differentiate instruction. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3.5, 3.6, 4.3 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence during the review demonstrated the instructional delivery in intervention classes is insufficient for students two or more years below grade level. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1.5, 1.6, 1.7, 1.8, 4.3, 7.2 	

VII. Recommendations

Background

This section outlines an intentionally targeted set of recommendations that align to one or more of the school's prioritized Turnaround Principles. Anchored in the United States Department of Education's Turnaround Principles framework, these recommendations are representative of what the Technical Assistance Team believes to be the most immediate changes needed to accelerate growth in academic and non-academic student outcomes at Decatur Township School for Excellence. These recommendations should not be thought of as an exhaustive set of school improvement strategies, but rather as a part of the ongoing and continuous school improvement process.

Recommendation 1
Identify and implement an evidence based instructional coaching framework that provides building leaders and teachers the following: (1) on-going, relevant and timely professional development aligned with the school goals, (2) modeling of effective instructional practices, and (3) professional support through individualized feedback of classroom instruction.
Aligned Turnaround Principle(s)
1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 1.7, 1.9, 2.2, 2.3, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 4.2, 4.4, 4.5, 5.2, 5.3, 5.5, 6.3, 7.3
Rationale
<p>According to the Center of Public Education, "Professional development can no longer just be about exposing teachers to a concept in a one-time workshop, or giving teachers basic knowledge about a teaching methodology. Instead, professional development in an era of accountability requires a fundamental change in a teacher's practice that leads to increases in student learning in the classroom. In order to use professional development as a vehicle for improvement, districts need to know how teachers learn new skills. Districts have typically assumed teacher learning is straightforward, with teachers merely needing to be presented with information about effective teaching strategies. But research suggests teachers' learning process is more complex than that."</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Though research shows that it is ineffective, a majority of districts offer traditional, workshop-based professional development.• Teachers struggle with the implementation of new approaches, not learning them.• For long lasting change, professional development should be on-going over time.• The use of coaches is found to be highly effective in helping teachers with the implementation of new strategies.¹

¹ Gulamhussein, Allison (2013). *Teaching the Teachers: Effective Professional Development*. Center for Public Education.

Evidence during the review demonstrated the need for a professional development system that is ongoing, timely and relevant. In addition, based on multiple stakeholder input, the current structure does not align with the school goals, modeling of effective instructional practice or regular opportunities for individualized feedback. The current professional development calendar identifies weekly topics with an intentional focus on the social/emotional needs of students including student trauma and restorative practices. Additional topics include the following: classroom management, second semester goals, RTI, SQR prep, TAP review, school business and classroom intervention strategies. There is a lack of priority in the current plan to assist teachers in the successful implementation of evidence-based instructional strategies which would result in increased student achievement.

In conversations with district office, a robust and comprehensive professional development plan will be implemented in the 2018-2019 school year. Lead and mentor teacher positions are being filled and a long-range plan will be finalized upon final training of the leadership team. The professional learning plan will include a continuous coaching cycle with a focus on evidenced-based instructional strategies and data analysis.

Recommendation 2
Collaborate with teachers in the research, initial implementation, active application, and sustained use of evidence-based instructional strategies aligned to the College and Career Ready instructional shifts. Throughout this progression of implementation, ensure ongoing professional development, feedback, and coaching support for teachers are adjoined with classroom observations in order to promote educator reflection that gauges the impact of these prioritized strategies for student growth and achievement.
Aligned Turnaround Principle(s)
3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 4.2, 4.4, 5.2, 5.3, 5.5
Rationale
<p>Research indicates that evidence-based teaching strategies are likely to have the largest impact on student achievement. In <i>Visible Learning</i>, by John Hattie, high-impact, evidence-based teaching strategies include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct Instruction • Note Taking & Other Study Skills • Spaced Practice • Feedback • Teaching Metacognitive Skills • Teaching Problem Solving Skills • Reciprocal Teaching • Mastery Learning • Concept Mapping • Worked Examples <p>Classroom observations at Decatur Township School for Excellence, revealed teachers need additional professional development to support their effective implementation of multiple instructional strategies. In 33% of classrooms were</p>

multiple instructional strategies observed that actively engage and meet student learning needs. Classrooms, outside of Mindful Arts Pathway, provided students opportunities to work on self-paced courses or independent work time on assignments with minimal teacher instruction. Checks for understanding, which allow teachers to monitor student learning and adjust instructional strategies, were observed in only 32% of classrooms.²

Recommendation 3
Research and establish a system of academic intervention based on a triangulation of data in order to provide high leverage instruction to students who are not only in need of remediation, but enrichment as well, in order to promote growth and achievement for all students. Provide professional development to educators in order to effectively implement the system and monitor the fidelity of use.
Aligned Turnaround Principle(s)
4.5, 7.2
Rationale
<p>In order for an intervention and enrichment program to produce maximum results, current student assessment data must be used. By identifying individual students, as well as his or her areas of need, teachers can plan and provide targeted support that will significantly impact student growth.</p> <p>It is necessary for teachers, highly qualified in specific content areas, to utilize evidenced-based instruction and not solely rely on the self-paced resources such as Apex or independent work time. Based on observations of the intervention and enrichment classes, there was minimal evidence of student engagement in targeted interventions. Some students were observed working individually on Apex and other assignments but receiving little guidance or direction from teachers. In some classes, student motivation to complete any task was non-existent.</p> <p>To maximize student learning during the intervention and enrichment periods, student groupings should be based on current formative assessment data which aligns to the Indiana Academic Standards for math and English/Language Arts (ELA), and move frequently according to identified student needs. Additionally, students who demonstrate the most significant academic needs are assigned to the teachers who consistently implement best practice instructional strategies with fidelity.</p> <p>Ideally, long-term planning would begin soon to design a more systematic and targeted intervention program for the 2018-1019 school year. Given the urgency to improve student achievement, the school must immediately ensure that students with the greatest academic need are assigned to the teachers who have demonstrated the capacity and willingness to effectively provide targeted instruction.</p>

² Killian, Shaun (2017) Hattie's 2017 Updated List of Factors Influencing Student Achievement 2017 Update. Retrieved from: <http://www.evidencebasedteaching.org.au/hattie-his-high-impact-strategies/>

VIII. Appendix A: Evidence for Remaining School Turnaround Principles

Background

We believe it is valuable for school and district leaders to have a summary of the TAT's findings and evidence for each of the eight Turnaround Principles. As such, this section of the report outlines key findings and supporting evidence for each of the Turnaround Principles that were not identified by school and district leaders as prioritized Turnaround Principles for this school.

This information is intentionally provided in an appendix to reinforce the importance of the previously stated findings, evidence, ratings, and recommendations for the school's prioritized Turnaround Principles.

School Turnaround Principle 1: School Leadership	
Evidence Sources	
Classroom Observations, Observations of Hallway Transitions and Common Areas, Teacher Focus Group, Student Focus Group, Parent Focus Group, Community Focus Group, Principal Interviews, Teacher Surveys, Artifacts Provided by Decatur Township School of Excellence	
Evidence Summary	
Strengths <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Data gathered through teacher focus groups and interviews showed 83% agree or strongly agreed the principal ensures students and teachers feel safe, welcome, and ready to learn and teach.• Parent surveys revealed that 78% feel the principal supports academically focused relationships between parents and teachers.• According to teacher and student focus groups, the principal creates positive relationships with all students. Evidence from the teacher focus groups include the following: "He tries to have a relationship with every single student." "He stays on top of it and has conversations with every student. This helps when difficult moments come up because he has already created a relationship with those students." His goal is to get every single student a diploma." "We are all a team, and he is the cornerstone." Evidence from the student focus groups include the following: "100% of students know and like the principal." "He is fun, funny, and approachable." "If you need someone to talk to, he is the man. He is a really good listener." "I see him a lot in classrooms. He is always roaming the school." "Very supportive and encourages our projects. He gets really excited and competitive in our projects."	
Areas for Improvement <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Information gathered from interviews as well as the principal's self-evaluation indicate that teachers are ineffective at using a variety of instructional strategies that engage all students. Consequently, classroom instruction is not adjusted based on formative or summative assessment.	

- The principal expressed a vision for high quality teaching; however, based on classroom observations the primary instructional strategy utilized was self-paced student learning.
- Observations of professional learning communities demonstrate the principal sets the expectation that teachers use data for collaboration; however, does not monitor the use of recent formative assessment data or the alignment and rigor to the Indiana Academic Standards.

School Turnaround Principle 5: Effective Staffing Practices

Evidence Sources

Classroom Observations, Observations of Hallway Transitions and Common Areas, Teacher Focus Group, Student Focus Group, Parent Focus Group, Community Focus Group, Principal Interviews, Teacher Surveys, Artifacts Provided by Decatur Township School of Excellence

Evidence Summary

Strengths

- A majority of classrooms are staffed with full-time certified teachers with multiple licensure areas. This allows school leadership the flexibility in staff assignments and course offerings.
- The teacher focus group and principal interview revealed the initial implementation of a consistent behavior system of rewards and consequences with a system of tracking data (SWISS system).

Areas for Improvement

- Professional development lacks a focus on student achievement in regards to the Indiana Academic Standards and building instructional capacity of teachers to improve instruction with evidence-based practices.
- Although formal and informal feedback are offered, according to stakeholder focus groups, there is a lack of support and follow-up to ensure instructional improvement.

School Turnaround Principle 6: Enabling the Effective Use of Data

Evidence Sources

Classroom Observations, Observations of Hallway Transitions and Common Areas, Teacher Focus Group, Student Focus Group, Parent Focus Group, Community Focus Group, Principal Interviews, Teacher Surveys, Artifacts Provided by Decatur Township School of Excellence

Evidence Summary

Strengths

- Evidence from interviews, focus groups, and surveys revealed teachers have periodic access to data, which could inform instructional strategies.
- According the principal interview and self-evaluation, RTI teams meet monthly to review data on accrued credits; remediation classes are scheduled daily in order to address deficiencies.
- The parent focus group emphasized the communication between the school and parents in regards to the APEX program. "We get weekly reports indicating what they have done and what they need to work on. This helps me encourage my kid on where they need to work harder and keep improving. I get to have a data talk with my child."

Areas for Improvement

- Focus groups and interviews indicate that although teachers have regularly scheduled collaboration, there is currently not a specific process for the analysis of formative assessment data in any content area.
- Professional development is not intentionally linked to the learning needs of teachers based on evaluation data.
- Leader walk-throughs are not regularly scheduled and do not specifically focus on high priority needs.

School Turnaround Principle 7: Effective Use of Time

Evidence Sources

Classroom Observations, Observations of Hallway Transitions and Common Areas, Teacher Focus Group, Student Focus Group, Parent Focus Group, Community Focus Group, Principal Interviews, Teacher Surveys, Artifacts Provided by Decatur Township School of Excellence

Evidence Summary

Strengths

- The master schedule is designed to allow the flexibility of student placement in core classes, remediation, and enrichment classes.
- Teachers have regularly scheduled release time for professional development and collaboration.

Areas for Improvement

- Based on observations and focus group interviews, some classes are not structured to meet student-specific academic needs and are primarily computer driven or independent work time.
- In only 56% of classroom observations were students able to articulate the lesson objective or its purpose.

School Turnaround Principle 8: Family and Community Engagement

Evidence Sources

Classroom Observations, Observations of Hallway Transitions and Common Areas, Teacher Focus Group, Student Focus Group, Parent Focus Group, Community Focus Group, Principal Interviews, Teacher Surveys, Artifacts Provided by Decatur Township School of Excellence

Evidence Summary

Strengths

- Adults in the school identify struggling students and connect them with the appropriate services to ensure their well-being.
- Parents and students indicated in focus groups that the school community “feels like a family” and the school creates a sense of belonging for each student.

Areas for Improvement

- Out of 40 parent surveys collected, only 15 parents agreed or strongly agreed with this statement, “The school provides me with a copy of the schedule.”
- Parents are notified of student academic progress; however, many are not engaged in a continuous cycle of planning, reviewing, and revising learning goals for the student.
- The lack of partnership with the career center prevents many Decatur Township School of Excellence students the option to utilize that opportunity. This was revealed in multiple stakeholder focus groups and interviews.